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# The Defenses of Washington

*General Early's Advance  
on the Capital and the  
Battle of Fort Stevens,  
July 11 and 12, 1864*



By WILLIAM V. COX

Sold for the benefit of the  
Fort Stevens Preservation Fund  
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*AT a meeting of the Fort Stevens-Lincoln Military Park Association, held on November 14, 1901, on motion of Lewis C. White, the following resolution was unanimously adopted:*

*"Resolved, That W. V. Cox, Esq., be requested to have printed for the use of the Association his very interesting address before the Columbia Historical Society on 'The Defenses of Washington—General Early's Advance on the Capital and the Battle of Fort Stevens, July 11 and 12, 1864.'"*

*Thomas M. Vincent,*

Bvt. Brig. Gen'l, U. S. A.,

President.

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The Adjutant General of Rhode Island.





THE DEFENSES OF WASHINGTON—GENERAL  
EARLY'S ADVANCE ON THE CAPITAL  
AND THE BATTLE OF FORT STE-  
VENS, JULY 11 AND 12, 1864.\*

By WILLIAM V. COX.

(Read before the Society April 2, 1900.)

When Fort Sumter was fired on, April 12, 1861, the city of Washington was as defenseless as it was in 1814, when it was captured by the British, and our engineer officers were said at that time to have known less about its surroundings than of the approaches to Paris and other European capitals. On May 23, 1861, the first serious effort was made to construct fortifications. On the night of that day Major Wood proceeded by the way of the Aqueduct Bridge, Major Heintzelman by the Long Bridge, and Colonel Ellsworth by Alexandria, to take positions and erect fortifications to protect the city, and secure for the Union army a foothold in Virginia, which, on April 17th, had passed the ordinance of secession.

General Mansfield was chief engineer officer in locating the forts, and with him, among other officers, was Major Horatio G. Wright, who afterwards became commander of the Sixth Army Corps.

The security of the capital being paramount, the sites were taken possession of as a military necessity, and, as a rule, the lands in front of the forts and trenches were cleared for a considerable distance, the timber being used in the construction of the forts and abatis.

The officers of the Engineer Corps were greatly hampered in their work by a clause in the bill forbidding the

\* A list of authorities used in the preparation of this paper is given in appendix A, page 162.

expenditure of any part of the \$150,000 appropriation for new fortifications. In and out of Congress it was claimed that there was no need of forts, for were not the hills and valleys covered with camps of unselfish, self-sacrificing, patriotic volunteers? Could not the stern, unyielding determination of the men be relied upon? It was admirable logic, but the mistake in it was that both sides failed to realize that each possessed the same characteristics—they were Americans.

It was not until after the battle of Bull Run, July 21, 1861, that the defenselessness of the Capital was fully realized, when so greatly demoralized was the Union army that the city could have been easily captured by the Confederates, had they not been even more demoralized by their victory than the Federals by their defeat.

Mr. Stanton, when he became Secretary of War, quickly grasped the situation, and, regardless of the law referred to, appointed a commission to report on the necessity of completing the forts and the general defenses of the city.

The very best engineers in the army, Generals Totten, Meigs, Barry, Barnard and Cullum were placed on the Commission, and to these officers the thanks of the nation were due for that magnificent system of forts and batteries, sixty-eight in number, each flanking the other and spread out around Washington for a distance of 37 miles.

Eighteen of these forts were located between Fort Sumner on the Potomac above Georgetown, in Maryland, and Fort Lincoln, near the Anacostia, where the gallant Barney's guns were posted on August 24, 1814, to hold in check the British "red coats" as they advanced from Bladensburg.\* In addition to these forts there were, between Forts Sumner and Lincoln, four batteries of heavy

\* In the autumn of 1862, a force of several thousand troops were employed in constructing rifle-trenches and roads, felling timber, building new and repairing old works, and in the spring and summer of 1863, 1,500 men were employed on the fortifications.

artillery and twenty-three batteries of light artillery, together forming what General Barnard describes as "a connected system of fortifications by which every point at intervals of 800 to 1,000 yards was occupied by an inclosed field fort, every important approach or depression of ground unseen from the forts was swept by a battery of field guns, and the whole connected by rifle-trenches which were in fact lines of infantry parapet, furnishing employment for two ranks of men and affording covered communications along the line, while the roads were open wherever necessary, so that troops and artillery could be moved rapidly from one point of the immense periphery to another, or under cover from point to point along the line."\*

In those days, as now, the Seventh Street Pike (Brightwood Avenue) was the leading thoroughfare to and from Washington, and at a point five miles from the Capitol, where the cordon of defenses crossed this road, at a height of 321 feet above mean tide, a fort was built in October, 1861, by the troops, who named it "Massachusetts" in honor of the old Bay State.

The fort being found inadequate for its important purpose, it was enlarged in 1862 and 1863, and on April 1st of that year, the name was changed to Fort Stevens, in memory of Brigadier-General Isaac Ingalls Stevens, who had just lost his life at Chantilly, Virginia.†

The ramparts of Fort Stevens extended from a point about fifty feet north of the present schoolhouse, in a northern

\* A military road was constructed from Fort Sumner to Fort Stevens in September, 1862, a distance of about  $5\frac{1}{2}$  miles; speaking of which Professor George C. Schaeffer said: "When the defenses are swept away, the roads may remain as a lasting benefit."

† When his troops wavered under the terrific fire, General Stevens rushed forward to the leading regiment, seized the colors from the wounded bearer and calling on the Highlanders to follow him, led them in the onslaught which hurled back the enemy. In the moment of victory he fell, his brain pierced by a bullet in the temple, the flag of his country in his dying grasp.—Life of General Stevens, by General Hazard Stevens.

direction for the distance of about 160 feet, outside measurement, then in a general northwest direction for the distance of 140 feet, then northwest at a more acute angle 90 feet, then nearly west for the distance of 220 feet, then southwest about 80 feet, and then south about 114 feet, as you now see it, with a perimeter of 1,125 feet, inside measurement. The two ends on the south were connected by a stockade. The entrance was from this side and a blockhouse about half way between the entrance and the west end of the fort flanked the stockade. The fort had two magazines; one where Emory Chapel now stands, and the other to the west, where the depression is still visible. The house of Elizabeth Thomas, who is still alive (and known to most of us), was torn down and the cellar enlarged for this magazine.\* A bomb-proof, about 150 feet in length, extended northwest and southeast parallel to the stockade and about 50 feet from it. A flagstaff stood on the east side of the fort, where the chapel now stands. (Lat.  $38^{\circ} 57' 47.16''$ , long.  $77^{\circ} 01' 23.57''$ .) Around the entire fort was an abatis.

The fort, described as "a powerful and satisfactory work," was protected by rifle-trenches—those on the northwest side are still standing and in good preservation.

During the war various troops camped in and around Fort Stevens, and to-day, those who recall "war times" will tell you of the 7th Massachusetts being encamped on the White farm on the west side of Brightwood Avenue; the 10th Massachusetts on the Lay farm; the 36th New

\* Aunt Betty says: "The soldiers camped here at this time were mostly German. I could not understand them, not even the officers, but when they began taking out my furniture and tearing down our house, I understood. In the evening I was sitting under that sycamore tree—my only house—with what furniture I had left around me. I was crying, as was my six-months'-old child, which I had in my arms, when a tall, slender man, dressed in black, came up and said to me: 'It is hard, but you shall reap a great reward.' It was President Lincoln, and had he lived I know the claim for my losses would have been paid."

York on the east side of Brightwood Avenue, opposite the hotel; the Rhode Island Regiment on the old Ray farm by Piney Branch; the Maine battery was west; battery L, First Ohio, was east of Fort Stevens, while the "Hundred Day men," all from Ohio, were then, as now, everywhere.

It may interest you to know that among those Buckeyes who saw service at Fort Stevens in 1864, was Gov. Geo. K. Nash, Private in Co. K, 150th Ohio National Guard. Marcus A. Hanna, Second Lieutenant in Co. C, was stationed at Fort Bunker Hill.

In the hollow ground south of Fort Stevens, capable of sheltering large bodies of men from curved artillery fire, were built barracks and officers' quarters, partly from timber cut down in front of the fortifications and from lumber in houses and fences belonging to Mr. M. G. Emery and others, which the soldiers tore down without consulting the owners. During the battle these barracks were converted into hospitals for receiving the wounded. The bricks from the chimneys and foundations of the torn-down houses were used in constructing baking ovens.

The Emery house, still standing, was used for headquarters by Gen. D. A. Couch, Gen. Francis A. Walker and other officers, while the cupolo was used as a signal station, and many were the messages, it is said, that were "wig-wagged" from it to the Soldiers' Home, to Mt. Pleasant and even to the Capitol.

The armament of Fort Stevens consisted of 19 guns and two mortars; of these, five were 30-pound rifled Parrott, and ten 24-pound and two 8-inch smooth-bore guns. Four of the guns were on Barbette carriages, two at the northeast and two at the northwest.

A map of Gen. Meigs, a copy of which I have, shows the relative ranges of the guns, the outer one being near the District line.



At many points the earthworks have been leveled, but thirty-six years ago, these same old earthworks saved the nation's capital.

In the summer of 1864, Grant was crowding Lee toward Richmond; Gen. Hunter, having defeated Jones near Staunton, was threatening Lynchburg. Lee thereupon determined to follow the example of Napoleon who made it the fashion of Europe to dash through all obstacles to the Capital of the enemy; so he divided his army and on June 12, 1864, ordered Early to take Ewell's corps, then near Gaines' Mill, Cold Harbor, and attack Hunter in the rear, push down the Shenandoah Valley, cross the Potomac, enter Maryland and surprise Washington. Lee probably reasoned that this movement would induce Grant to attack him, strongly entrenched, or divide his army when he hoped to engage and destroy him. Accordingly Early started the next day, June 13th, on his famous campaign. He struck Hunter, who retired \* down the Kanawha Valley, crossing the Potomac near Harper's Ferry, and was in Maryland and was shelling Sigel's force as it ascended the Maryland Heights before Grant would believe that he was not in his front opposing him.

On July 8th, Early moved around Sigel's force and on the 9th, was at Frederick. Having exacted a tribute of \$200,000, he moved out and defeated Gen. Lew Wallace at Monocacy River. So ambitious was Early to capture, or as he afterwards said, threaten Washington that he did not follow up Wallace, but marched at once on to the Capital. On July 10th, he appeared at Rockville, ten miles from Fort Stevens, where Maj. Fry, of Lowell's cavalry, briskly engaged him for an hour and a half, but when

\* Hunter moved down the Kanawha and up the Ohio to Parkersburg, where he took the B. & O. R. R., July 5th. On the 10th, his cavalry reoccupied Martinsburg. The slow movement was due to the low water in the Ohio and the injury done to the railroad by Imboden. The troops were compelled to march from Cherry Run.

Early brought his artillery to bear, retreated to within a couple of miles of Tennallytown.

The rapid and successful movement of the energetic Early, the appearance of bodies of his forces in the most unexpected quarters, startled the North. Instead of there being "an entire feeling of security for its safety from menace," the Capital was actually threatened by Early's troops, flushed with success. Indeed there were grave reasons to believe that with its defenses stripped of the disciplined artillery by Gen. Grant, the Capital would be captured by the southern veterans, incited by the prize and inspired by the audacity of the undertaking. The heart of the North beat quickly, for it saw that with the Capital in the possession of the enemy, grave complications would follow by the recognition of the Confederate States by foreign powers, longing only for a plausible pretext to begin the diplomatic campaign of dismemberment.

As we look back at the actual condition of affairs in Washington in 1864, we find that there were barely enough artillerymen for a single relief of gunners. There was only one fifth enough infantry available to man the parapets, and a small brigade of cavalry, mostly unmounted. If we may judge by what Gen. Halleck wired an ambitious officer on July 11th, Washington was defended by Generals. He says: "We have five times as many generals as we want but we are greatly in need of privates. Anyone volunteering in that capacity will be thankfully received."

Gen. C. C. Augur was in command of the Department of Washington, while Gen. A. McD. McCook was in command of the troops and fortifications. The latter, according to the Meigs map, had his headquarters, on July 11th and 12th, at Mooreland's Tavern, where Brightwood Hotel now stands.

Every man in Washington was utilized for defense.

Gen. M. C. Meigs called out the Quartermaster employes, and had his headquarters at Fort Slocum, the first fort east of Fort Stevens. Still further to the east was Fort Totten, where there was a 100-pound gun which swept the section from Fort De Russy, where there was another 100-pound gun, to Fort Lincoln. The Veteran Reserves and the District volunteers were also called out, and all available sailors and marines were placed under the command of Admiral Goldsborough, while all the men that could be spared were drawn from the forts south of the Potomac. (Appendix B, page 164.)

The swiftness of Early's approach gave little time for preparations. Gen. McCook, who had been ordered to command a reserve camp on Piney Branch Creek, proceeded on Sunday afternoon, July 10th, to make an examination of the ground. During the night, he says, the 2d District Volunteers, the 9th Regiment Veteran Reserves and Capt. Gibb's and Bradley's Batteries reported to him. On Monday morning the alarming news from the front forced him to move his troops to the rifle trenches on either side of Fort Stevens. He sent out a skirmish line and took command of the fort and lines which he had never seen before his arrival. Gen. McCook, in his report, speaking of the defenders of Washington, said, "I hazard the remark that there never was before a command so heterogeneous, yet so orderly. The hale and hearty soldier, the invalid, the convalescent, the wounded, and the Quartermaster's employes, side by side, each working with a singleness of purpose and willing to discharge any duty imposed upon him."

There seems, however, to have been much confusion among the commanders. Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, is authority for the statement that "Gen. Halleck would not give orders, except as he received them from Grant; the President would give none;



and until Grant directed positively and explicitly what was to be done, everything was at a standstill."

When Gen. Grant realized the gravity of the situation, and that Hunter could render no assistance, he at first thought of returning from Petersburg to Washington to take command in person. On reflection, however, he decided to send back the 6th Corps, commanded by Gen. Horatio Wright, "an excellent officer," as he says, and well known to many of us and whose death we have recently been called to mourn.

The 25th New York Cavalry, the headquarters Guard of Gen. Grant, which left City Point, Virginia, July 7th, seems to have been the first regiment to reach Washington from the James and went into camp about midnight of the 10th of July, near Fort Stevens. The same day, the 1st and 2d Divisions of the 6th Corps left City Point for Washington. A few hours later, General W. H. Emory, with a part of the 19th Corps, just returning from New Orleans to join Grant, left Fortress Monroe for Washington without disembarking from their ocean transports.

What a picture! Early with his fighting legion, advancing on the Capital from the north, while fleets bearing the veterans of the 6th and 19th Army Corps were on their way from the James and the Gulf of Mexico to save the capital they loved so well. North and South looked on with bated breath and wondered which, in this race of armies, would reach Washington first.

Disquieting rumors of all kinds were being circulated in Baltimore and Washington.

Neither Lincoln, Stanton nor Halleck lacked coolness nor energy in this trying emergency, say Nicolay and Hay. The President's chief anxiety was for the capture of Early, as is shown by the letter he wrote Gen. Grant, in which he says that the difficulty will be to unite Wright and Hunter south of the enemy, before they recross the

Potomac, adding significantly "some firing between Rockville and here now." The President seems to have been unusually calm, thinking little of personal danger, for we find that on July 10th, he wired Gov. Swann, at Baltimore, "Let us be vigilant, but keep cool." He left the White House, the evening of that day, against the protests of officials, and rode to the cottage he occupied at the Soldiers' Home.

When Mr. Stanton learned that the enemy had appeared in strong force at Tennytown and Silver Spring, he sent a carriage for the President and insisted upon his returning that night to Washington. Mr. Lincoln seemed to have caused all the officials worry for his personal safety; the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Captain G. V. Fox, was so anxious that he took the precaution to have a vessel ready in case it were necessary for the President to leave Washington. The solicitude shown both by Stanton and Fox discomposed and irritated Mr. Lincoln.

As already indicated, it cannot be truly said that there was tranquility in Washington. On July 6th Secretary Stanton wired General Hunter at Parkersburg:

"You cannot be too speedy in your movements in this direction with your whole force."

The telegram of General Lew Wallace on July 10th was not conducive to entire mental composure of even the most buoyant. "I have been defeated," he said; "the enemy are not pursuing me, from which I infer they are marching on Washington."

On July 11th Charles A. Dana wired Grant: "Washington and Baltimore are in a state of great excitement. Both cities are filled with country people fleeing from the enemy. The damage to private property done by the invaders is almost beyond calculation. Mills, workshops and factories of every sort have been destroyed. From twenty-five to fifty miles of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad have been torn up."

"The boldness of the movement," wired Halleck to Grant, "would indicate that he is stronger than we supposed."

General McCook wired Colonel Taylor on the morning of the 11th: "The advance cavalry pickets two and a half miles beyond fortifications report the enemy advancing in force on the Leesborough road. My force is small, but will do my best."

General McCook wired General Augur at 12:30 P. M., July 11th: "The enemy is advancing on my front with cavalry, artillery and infantry."

The Signal Officer wired: "The enemy is within twenty rods of Fort Stevens."\*

On the morning of July 11th, General Early left his camp near Rockville, McCausland taking the Georgetown pike; the infantry, preceded and flanked by cavalry, taking the Seventh street pike, Major Frye, of Lowell's cavalry, met the enemy's cavalry skirmishers a short distance beyond the picket line, on the Georgetown pike, before noon and forced them back on their reserves. He, in turn, was forced back by the enemy, who fired a few shots from a battery of light artillery. Colonel Marble, of the 151st Ohio, was in command of the line near Fort De-Russy, which was weak on account of the topography and the shelter afforded by logs, rocks and stumps in the valley of Rock Creek.†

About 11 o'clock, the signal officer, at Fort Reno observed clouds of dust and army wagons moving on the

\* The troops garrisoning the fort July 10, were composed of Co. K, 150th Ohio, 78 men, Capt. A. A. Safford; 13th Michigan battery, 79 men, Capt. Charles Dupont; 52 convalescents, commanded by Lieut. H. L. Turner, 150th Ohio.—War of the Rebellion, Vol. 37, Series 1, p 247.

† A persistent statement is made that General Breckenridge wanted to take his command and force the Union lines by Rock Creek; then face east and west, take the works in escalade, form a junction with the rest of the Confederate forces, and march into Washington.

Seventh street pike, and General McCook was promptly informed.\* About the same time he received a message from Captain Berry, 8th Illinois Cavalry, that the enemy with artillery, cavalry and infantry was moving in the direction of Silver Spring. General McCook ordered the picket line, composed of 150 O. V. I., and the 25th New York Cavalry, Dismounted Cavalry under Major G. G. Briggs, 7th Michigan Cavalry, and the Veteran Reserves, to contest the ground and to retire slowly on approach of the enemy until within range of the guns of Forts Stevens, Slocum and DeRussy.†

Shortly after noon, riding in advance with Rodes, whose division, consisting of Given's and Cox's North Carolinians, Crook's Georgians and Battle's Alabamians, in the van, General Early came, as he says, in full view of Fort Stevens, and found it feebly manned, as had been reported to him. Smith, of Imboden's Cavalry (Early says), drove a small body of Union Cavalry before him into the works, dismounting his men and deploying them as skirmishers.

What must have been the thoughts of Early as he contemplated that "feebly manned fort," beyond which arose the majestic dome of the Capitol! I have little doubt but that he said to himself that the Confederate flag would be floating there before the sun sank across the Potomac and behind the Virginia hills.

No time, however, could be lost, and he ordered Rodes to bring his division of tired and dusty veterans in line as rapidly as possible and move "into the works"; but be-

\* At 11 o'clock on the morning of the 11th, the enemy commenced the attack on the picket line.—Colonel J. N. Frasee.

Captain Joseph N. Abbey, 2d Pennsylvania Heavy Artillery (at Fort Slocum), says: "The enemy appeared at the corner of the woods on Seventh Street, opposite Mr. Blair's house, about 3,200 yards in front of this fort (evidently Lay House)."

† Wm. E. Leach, Co. K, 150 Ohio, was the first man wounded on picket and died shortly afterwards.—Vol. 37, Series 1, p. 245. War of the Rebellion.

fore his order could be executed, to his great surprise and everlasting regret he saw trained and disciplined troops move out of the works, deploy and form a skirmish line.

What must have been his disappointment! Nothing daunted, the tireless Early and his brave men continued to advance, but with a greater degree of caution than before. It was too late, the hopes and ambitions of only an hour ago could never be realized. Washington is saved to the Union! What Early thought had happened, now happened; the 6th Corps had arrived. Never was there a more opportune movement, never was there a more welcome arrival. Down the historic James, up the historic Potomac, came the 6th Corps. Mr. Lincoln, who had been at Fort Stevens in the morning, drove to the 7th street wharf to meet and welcome them. How they cheered him, and how warmly he greeted them! With what alacrity both officers and men marched to reinforce the brave defenders on the firing line! Dr. Geo. T. Stevens, the historian of the 6th Army Corps, says "The column was formed and we marched up 7th street, past the Smithsonian Institution, the Patent Office and the Post Office, meeting on our way many old friends, and hearing people who crowded on the sidewalks, exclaiming, "It is the old 6th Corps"—"These are the men who took Mayre's Heights"—"The danger is over now." Washington, an hour before, was in a panic; now, as the people saw the veterans wearing the badge of the Greek cross marching through their streets, the excitement subsided and confidence prevailed.

"Thus we made our way to the north of the city, the sound of cannonading in our front stimulating and hastening the steps of the men.

"Families with a few of their choicest articles of household furniture loaded into wagons, were hastening to the

city, reporting that their houses were burned, or that they had made their escape, leaving the greater part of their goods to the mercy of the Rebel.

"We reached a pine grove in the rear of Fort DeRussy, and made our bivouac for the night." \*

Gen. Frank Wheaton in his report says: "While marching up Pennsylvania Avenue in compliance with the instructions of the Corps commander, I was halted by Col. Taylor, Chief of Staff, Department of Washington, and informed by him that the enemy was driving in our picket line and seriously threatening Fort Stevens on 7th Street, and received through him Gen. Augur's instructions to march at once in that direction, instead of Chain Bridge as first ordered. I turned my Brigade up 11th (probably 14th) street, and while on the march to Fort Stevens, was passed by Gen. Wright, commanding the Corps, and received his verbal instructions to mass near Crystal Spring in the neighborhood of Fort Stevens, where we arrived at 4 o'clock in the afternoon.

"At 5 P. M., the force outside of Fort Stevens, consisting of a portion of the Veteran Reserve Corps, War Department clerks and citizen volunteers, was driven in toward the Fort by a portion of the enemy's forces under Early. At the same time, I was ordered to move 500 men of my brigade out to recover the line held in the afternoon. This was successfully accomplished before 7 o'clock by the 98th Pennsylvania Veteran Volunteers, Col. J. F. Bailler; 102d Penn. Vet. Vols., Maj. Thomas McLaughlin; and 139th Penn. Vols., Capt. James McGregor, which deployed as skirmishers, and drove the enemy's advance back to their main lines. The position was strengthened at dark by the 93d Penn. Vet. Volunteers, Lt. Col. J. S. Long, and the 62d New York Vet. Volunteers, Lt.

\* At 4 P. M. Gen. Wright wired Gen. Augur from Fort Stevens, "The head of my column has nearly reached the front."



Col. T. B. Hamilton, and extended from a point opposite the center of the line between Forts Stevens and Reno to the west, and a point opposite Fort Slocum on the east, a distance of about two miles. Skirmishing continued through the night." (Appendix C, page 165.)

Camp fires in considerable numbers were reported that night by the telegraph operator at Fort Stevens.

In vain had Early tried all the afternoon of July 11th to find a weak spot in the lines, but he was met everywhere by the fire of fort guns and musketry. The works he reported exceedingly strong, consisting of what appeared to be inclosed forts for heavy artillery, with a tier of lower works in front of each, pierced for an immense number of guns, the whole being connected by curtains with ditches in front and strengthened by palisades and abatis. The timber had been felled within cannon range all around and left on the ground, making a formidable obstacle, and every possible approach was raked by artillery. On the right was Rock Creek, running through a deep ravine, which had been rendered impassable by the felling of the timber on each side, and beyond were the works on the Georgetown pike, which had been reported to be the strongest of all; on the left, as far as the eye could reach, the works appeared to be of the same impregnable character.

Early thereupon held a consultation with his generals, Breckenridge, Rodes, Ramseur and Gordon, pointing out the necessity of action before the fords and mountain passes were closed against them. In concluding, he announced his purpose of making an assault at daylight. During the night a dispatch was received from Bradley Johnson, near Baltimore, stating that two corps of Grant's army had arrived in Washington. This caused a delay in the attack, and when examining the works at daylight July 12th, Gen. Early saw the parapets lined with troops, he says he

then determined to abandon the idea of capturing Washington.\*

A distinguished writer, who was at Brightwood during the battle, says: "July 12th came bright and glorious. The First Brigade of our 2d Division and our sharpshooters were on the picket in front of Fort Stevens, the second and third Brigades still enjoying the delightful shades of the groves in the rear of Fort DeRussy. From the parapet of Fort Stevens could be seen the lines of Rebel skirmishers, from whose rifles the white puffs of smoke rose as they discharged their pieces at our pickets. The valley beyond presented a scene of surpassing loveliness, with the rich green meadows, its fields of waving corn, its orchards and its groves.

The principal force of the enemy seemed to be in front of Fort Stevens; there it was determined to give them battle.

About 5 o'clock in the afternoon (July 12th), Gen. Wright ordered Gen. Wheaton to drive back the Confederate skirmish line and occupy the wooded points near the road, which, being so near our intrenchments, gave the enemy advantage of position; thereupon, Col. Bidwell was instructed to have the 3d Brigade move outside of the Fort and form, under cover of a ravine and woods, in two lines directly in the rear of the First Brigade, on the skirmish line. Col. Bidwell was also directed to select three of his best regiments to assist in the assault, the remaining portion of the Brigade to be held to support the general movement.

According to Gen. Wheaton, "The 7th Maine, 43d N. Y., Lt. Col. J. D. Visscher, and 49th N. Y., Lt. Col. G. W. ing the position, burying the dead, caring for the wounded,

\* It has been stated that this report grew out of the publication of a fictitious telegram, care being taken that a sufficient number of papers got into the hands of Southern sympathizers, when the edition was in a public manner suppressed.



Johnston were skillfully placed in position near the skirmish line under the direction of Col. Bidwell without the enemy discovering the movement.

“A preconcerted signal was made by a staff officer, when these regiments were in position, at which time the batteries from Forts Stevens and Slocum opened fire upon certain indicated points, strongly held by the enemy.

“As had been previously arranged, after the 36th shot from Fort Stevens had been fired, a signal was made from the parapet of that work and the commander of the skirmish line and three assaulting regiments dashed forward, surprising and hotly engaging the enemy, who was found to be much stronger than supposed. It became necessary to deploy immediately the three remaining regiments—the 77th New York, Lt. Col. French; 122d New York, Lt. Col. Dwight; and 61st Pennsylvania Volunteers—Bidwell’s Brigade, on the right of those he had already in the action, and the picket reserve of 150 men from the 102d Pennsylvania Volunteers, and a detachment of 80 men from the Vermont Brigade to support the skirmish line immediately on the right and left of the pike. The enemy’s stubborn resistance showed that a farther advance than already made would require more troops, and two regiments were sent for. Before their arrival, however (the 37th Massachusetts Volunteers, Lt. Col. Montague and 2d Rhode Island, Capt. E. H. Rhodes), an aide-de-camp from Gen. Wright directed me not to attempt more than holding of the position I had gained, as the object of the attack had been accomplished and the important points captured and held.

“This whole attack was as gallant as it was successful, and the troops never evinced more energy or determination. The losses were very severe, the brave Col. Bidwell losing many of his most valuable regimental commanders. \* \* \* The last shot was fired about 10 o’clock, and the remainder of the night was occupied in strength-

and relieving the skirmish line which had been two days in front constantly under fire,—by troops of the 2d Vermont Brigade.”

In concluding his report, Gen. Wheaton says: “Of the brave men of this command, who have so promptly and gallantly engaged the enemy, I cannot speak in too high terms of praise.

“They have never faltered in battle, nor murmured at the fatigues and hardships which they have been called upon to endure. They have nobly earned the admiration of their commander and the gratitude of the nation.”

Dr. Stevens describes the attack in these words:

“The flag of the 77th N. Y. waved the signal of readiness, the heavy ordnance in the fort sent volley after volley of thirty-two pound shells howling over the heads of our men into the midst of the Rebels, and through the house where so many of them had found shelter, and then at the command of ‘Sedgwick’s Man of Iron,’ the brave fellows started eagerly forward. They reached and passed the skirmishers, and the white puffs of smoke and the sharp crack of their rifles became more and more frequent, first the rattle of an active skirmish and then the continuous roar of a musketry battle.

“In magnificent order and with light steps, they ran forward up the ascent, through the orchard, through the little grove on the right, over the rail fence, up to the road, making straight for the first objective point, the frame house” (Lay) “in front. The Rebels, at first stood their ground, then gave way before the impetuous charge and though forced to seek safety in flight, turned and poured their volleys into the ranks of the pursuers. Lt. Col. Johnson, commanding the 49th N. Y., a brave man, who had never shrunk from danger, and who had shared all the various fortunes of the Brigade since its organization, fell mortally wounded. Col. Visscher of the

43d N. Y., who had but lately succeeded the beloved Wilson, was killed. Maj. James P. Jones, commanding the 7th Maine, was also among the slain; and Maj. Crosby, commanding the 61st Penn., who had just recovered from a bad wound which he received in the Wilderness, was taken to the hospital, where the surgeon removed his left arm from the shoulder. Col. W. B. French of the 77th N. Y. was injured. The commanding officer of every regiment in the Brigade was either killed or wounded.

“The fight had lasted but a few minutes, when the stream of bleeding, mangled ones began to come to the rear, men leaning upon the shoulders of comrades, or borne painfully on stretchers, the pallor of their countenances rendered more ghastly by the thick dust which settled upon them were brought into the hospitals by scores, where the medical officers, ever active in administering relief to their companions, were hard at work binding up ghastly wounds, administering stimulants, coffee and food, or resorting to the hard necessity of amputation.

“At the summit of the ascent, the Confederates were strengthened by their second line of battle, and here they made a stout resistance; but even this position they were forced to abandon in haste; and as darkness closed in upon the scene our men were left as victors in possession of the ground, lately accupied by the Rebels, having driven their adversaries more than a mile.

“The Vermont Brigade now came to the relief of the boys who had so gallantly won the field, and the third Brigade returned at midnight to the bivouac it had left in the morning. But not all returned. Many of those brave men who went with such alacrity into the battle had fallen to rise no more, in the orchard, in the road, about the frame house and upon the summit where the rebels had made so determined a resistance; their forms were stretched upon

the green sward and upon the dusty road, stiff and cold. Many more had come to the hospital severely injured, maimed for life or mortally wounded.\* (Appendix D, page 168.)

“The little brigade, numbering only a thousand men when it went into action, had lost two hundred and fifty of its number. \* \* \* We gathered our dead comrades from the field where they had fallen and gave them the rude burial of the soldier on the common near Fort Stevens. No officer of state, no lady of wealth, no citizen of Washington was there: but we laid them in their graves within sight of the Capitol, without coffins, with only their gory garments and their blankets around them. With the rude tenderness of soldiers, we covered them in the earth, and marked their names with our pencils on the little head-boards of pine, and turned sadly away to other scenes.”

Land of Earth's hope,  
On thy blood-reddened sod  
They died for the Nation,  
The Union, and God.  
Oh, that last charge!

On an eminence in the rear of the Confederate advance was John C. Breckenridge, the candidate receiving the

\* On July 11th twenty shots were fired from the guns of Fort Stevens—fourteen 30-pound, and six 24-pound. Of these, five were fired at the Confederates in a grove 1,050 yards distant; six 24-pound and two 30-pound shots were fired at them in the rear of the old target; one in the pike in front of the target; two at 2,000 yards distance; one at the skirmish line behind an orchard; one at the Carberry house (Lay); and two in their midst, at a distance of 1,254 yards.

On July 12th, sixty-seven shots were fired, thirty of them at the Carberry or Lay house, which was set on fire by shots from a mortar; fifteen at the Reeves house (B. H. Warner's house), 1,078 yards; four on the ground at the right of the pike, 1,050 yards; two in the ravine in the rear of the Lay house; ten at the carriage shop; two solid shots at the old camp, and four at the column *en masse*.

Fort DeRussy fired 109 shots, Fort Slocum 53.

General Early occupied the F. P. Blair house for his headquarters; General Imboden, the James Blair house.

votes of the seceding states for President, expecting to enter the Capital with the Army of Northern Virginia.

On the parapet of Fort Stevens, by the side of General Wright, amid the whizzing bullets, stood the successful candidate in that great political struggle, Abraham Lincoln, watching with that "grave and pensive countenance," the progress of the battle.

Four years ago, in company with the old commander of the 6th Corps and his daughter, Mrs. Rosa Wright Smith; Gen. D. S. Stanley; Capt. Thomas Wilson; Dr. C. G. Stone and James E. Kelly, the well-known sculptor of American history, I stood upon that same parapet. After contemplating the surroundings, Gen. Wright said, "There near the pike was the woods that was so full of Early's men; along this slope is where our skirmishers deployed; there a house was burned, there another, and still another; over these trenches went the brave soldiers of the 6th Corps. Where is the tree? I cannot find the tree from which a sharp-shooter picked off my men. The old toll-gate has gone also."

He paced up and down the top of the crumbling earth-works for awhile, as if to satisfy himself in regard to some fact, then said, "Here on the top of this parapet between this old embrasure and that, is the place where President Lincoln stood, witnessing the fight; there, by his side, a surgeon was wounded by a minie ball.

"I entreated the President not to expose his life to the bullets of the enemy; but he seemed oblivious to his surroundings; finally, when I found that my entreaties failed to make any impression on him, I said, 'Mr. President, I know you are commander of the armies of the United States, but I am in command here, and as you are not safe where you are standing, and I am responsible for your personal safety, I order you to come down.' Mr. Lincoln looked at me, smiled, and then, more in consideration of

my earnestness than from inclination, stepped down and took position behind the parapet. Even then, he would persist in standing up and exposing his tall form."

That old parapet, identified by Gen. Horatio G. Wright, stands to-day, and for history's sake should be preserved for a park on the only battlefield in the District of Columbia. It should be called after that benignant man of the people, Abraham Lincoln.\*

In gratitude, let us save all that remains of those silent reminders of the terrible days of war, as a monument to the bravery of the American soldier—a united North and South.

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## APPENDIX.

### A.

In preparing this paper I have consulted:

The War of the Rebellion, Vol. 37, Series 1, parts 1 and 2.

Defenses of Washington, J. G. Barnard, Washington Government Printing Office, 1871.

Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, Robt. U. Johnson and Clarence O. Buel, Century Company, New York.

The Civil War in the United States.

Greeley's American Conflict.

Draper's Civil War in America.

Lossing's Civil War.

Life of Lincoln, Nicolay and Hay.

Personal Memories of U. S. Grant, Century Company, New York.

Washington in Lincoln's Time, Noah Brooks, Century Company, New York, 1895.

\* Address by W. V. Cox at Flag Presentation, Brightwood Engine Company, August 6, 1897.



Three Years in the Sixth Corps, Dr. Geo. T. Stevens, Van Nostrand.

Official Roster, Soldiers of the State of Ohio in the War of the Rebellion, 1861-66. Werner Company, Akron, Ohio, 1893.

Ohio in the War of the Rebellion, Whitelaw Reid, Moore, Wilstach & Baldwin, Cincinnati, 1868.

Memoirs of the Confederate War for Independence, H. Von Borcke, Lippincott & Co., 1867.

General Early in *National Republican*, Washington, August 4, 1881.

Chas. A. Dana, *McClure's Magazine*, May, 1898.

A Reminiscence of Washington and Early's Attack in 1864, Edgar S. Dudley, First Lieutenant Second U. S. Artillery, Peter G. Thomson, Cincinnati, 1884.

Early's Raid on Washington, A Leaf from History. Col. Chamberlain, 25th N. Y. Cavalry, *The Republic*, Washington, March, 1877.

The American Soldier in the Civil War, Eldridge S. Brooks.

History of the 76th New York Volunteers. By Lieut. A. P. Smith.

Washington Sketch Book, Blanchard and Mohun.

Handy Guide to Washington, Rand, McNally & Co.

New York *Tribune*, July, 1864.

New York *Herald*, July, 1864.

*The Evening Star*, Washington, July, 1864.

*The Chronicle*, Washington, July, 1864.

*National Intelligencer*, Washington, July, 1864.

*Harper's Weekly*, July, 1864.

*Frank Leslie's*, July, 1864.

Contributors in the *National Tribune*, Washington.

Contributors in the local papers of Washington.

Letters from participants; interviews with same.

## B.

On July 10, 1864, there were *North of Potomac*, the 150, 151, 170 Regiments Ohio National Guard; 13 Companies Heavy Artillery (Volunteer); 2 Companies Light Artillery; 2 Companies U. S. Artillery. All under command of Brigadier-General M. D. Hardin, with an effective force, 1,819 Infantry, 1,834 Artillery, and 63 Cavalry.

*South of Potomac*, the 136, 145, 147, 164, 166, 169 Ohio National Guard; 6 Companies Heavy Volunteer Artillery; 12 Companies Light Volunteer Artillery; 2 Companies U. S. Artillery. Commanded by Brigadier-General G. A. De Russey, an effective force of 4,064 Infantry, 1,772 Artillery, 51 Cavalry.

In addition to these there were in Washington and Alexandria about 3,900 effectives (1 & 2 D. C. Vols. Veteran Reserves and detachments) doing guard duty under Generals Wisewell and Slough, and 6 Regiments, Veteran Reserves, about 4,400 men. At the Artillery Camps (Barry) there were five field batteries, 627 men.

A brigade of cavalry consisting of 2d Massachusetts, and 16th New York, numbering 800 effective men, was posted near Falls Church, and commanded by Col. C. R. Lowell, who resisted to the utmost Early's progress, and never hesitated to attack when it was desired to develop the enemy's force. \* \* \* The 8th Illinois Cavalry under Col. Gamble was at Fort Stoneman awaiting equipment. A part of this regiment was sent to Rockville and other points to observe the enemy. The other part was ordered to report to McCook, at Brightwood. The entire force numbered about 20,400 men, an inefficient force for service on the lines.—Defenses of Washington, p. 107, Barnard.

General McCook in his report gives the following as the strength of the Federal troops:



## RIGHT OF FORT STEVENS.

Provisional Brigade, Col. Price,	2,800
Second District Regiment, Col. Alexander,	550
12th Veteran Reserve, Col. Farnsworth,	550
Quartermaster employes,	1,800
Battery L, 1st Ohio, 2 guns,	121
7th Michigan Cavalry, Major Darling,	450

## LEFT OF FORT STEVENS.

2d Vermont,	232
3d Vermont,	272
147th Ohio,	465
9th Veteran Reserve,	350
157th Ohio,	184
1st Main Battery, 2 guns,	112
Total,	7,886

—War of the Rebellion, Vol. XXXVII., Series I.,  
p. 235.

## C.

General Early claims to have had but 8,000 muskets, 40 pieces of artillery, manned by 600 or 700 men, and 2,000 cavalry.

The accuracy of these figures has been questioned. General Sheridan characterizes the numbers as falsifying history.

A Southern writer makes the total 13,500.

General Wallace estimated the force that confronted him at Monocacy at 20,000.

General McCook, in his report, fixes the number at 30,000.

General Couch states that there were 60 pieces of artillery actually counted in passing South Mountain.

Colonel R. D. Cults, of General Halleck's staff, made

a careful estimate of Early's numbers from data from Generals Couch, Sigel and Howe, when Early was in the vicinity of Harper's Ferry.

He says that between the 3d and 18th of July, during the interval between the crossing of the Potomac and their retreat beyond the Shenandoah, the total number of prisoners, including wounded and captured from Early's command, was 1,255 officers and men, the name, rank and regiment in each case having been carefully ascertained and recorded.

These prisoners represented 99 regiments of infantry, 36 of cavalry, and 10 of artillery organizations, besides 5 or 6 separate battalions not specified as belonging to any particular arm of the service; and estimating the strength of each regiment at 180 officers and men, of the cavalry at 100, and of the artillery, 60 guns, at 100 for each battery, being actually less in each arm than that reported by prisoners, the following aggregate numbers result:

99 regiments of infantry,	17,820
36 " " cavalry,	3,600
rtillery, 60 guns,	1,000
	<hr/>
	22,420

—Defenses of Washington, pp. 120-121.

General Sheridan produced the receipt of the Provost Marshal General of the Department for 13,000 prisoners captured from Early's command during the Washington campaign.—Ohio in War, Vol. I., p. 522.

#### THE OPPOSING FORCES AT THE MONOCACY, MD.

JULY 9TH, 1864.

The Confederate Army.—Lieutenant General  
Jubal A. Early.

Gordon's Division,\* Maj. General John B. Gordon.

\* Maj.-Gen. John C. Breckenridge commanded Gordon's and Echol's divisions.

Evans Brigade, Brig.-Gen. C. A. Evans, Col. E. N. Atkinson; 13th Georgia, —; 26th Georgia, —; Col. E. N. Atkinson; 31st Georgia, —; 38th Georgia, —; 60th Georgia, —; 61st Georgia, Col. J. H. Lamar; 12th Georgia, Battalion, —; Hays Brigade,† Col. W. R. Peck; 5th Louisiana, —; 6th Louisiana, —; 7th Louisiana, —; 8th Louisiana, —; 9th Louisiana, —; Stafford's Brigade; \* 1st Louisiana, —; 2d Louisiana, —; 10th Louisiana, —; 14th Louisiana, —; 15th Louisiana, —; Terry's Brigade, † Brig.-Gen. William Terry, 2d, 4th, 5th, 27th, and 33d Virginia (Stonewall Brigade), Col. J. H. S. Funk; 21st, 25th, 42d, 44th, 48th, and 50th Virginia (J. M. Jones's brigade), Col. R. H. Dungan; 10th, 23d, and 37th (Virginia Steuart's brigade), Lieut.-Col. S. H. Saunders.

Breckenridge's Division, ‡ Brig.-Gen. John Echols.

(Consisted of Echols's, Wharton's and Vaughn's brigades the latter being dismounted cavalry.)

Rodes Division, Maj.-Gen. R. E. Rodes.

Grimes's Brigade: 32d N. C., —; 43d N. C., —; 45th N. C., —; 53d N. C., —; 2d N. C. Battalion, —; Cook's Brigade: 4th Georgia, —; 12th Georgia, —; 21st Georgia, —; 44th Georgia, —; Cox's Brigade: 1st N. C., —; 2d N. C., —; 3d N. C., —; 4th N. C., —; 14th N. C., —; 30th N. C., —; Battle's Brigade: 3d Alabama, —; 5th Alabama, —; 6th Alabama, —; 12th Alabama, —; 61st Alabama, —.

Ramseur Division, Maj.-Gen. S. D. Ramseur.

Lilly's Brigade: 13th Virginia, —; 31st Virginia, —; 49th Virginia, —; 52d Virginia, —; 58th Virginia, —;

\* United under the command of Brigadier-General Zebulon York.

† Composed of the "fragmentary remains of fourteen of the regiments of Edward Johnson's division, most of which was captured by the enemy May 12, 1864."

‡ Composition not clearly indicated.

Johnston's Brigade: 5th N. C., —; 12th N. C., —; 20th N. C., —; 23d N. C., —; Lewis's Brigade: 6th N. C., —; 21st N. C., —; —; 54th N. C., —; 57th N. C., —; 1st N. C. Battalion, —.

Calvary, Maj. Gen. Robert Ransom.

(Composed of the brigades of McCausland, Imboden, W. L. Jackson and Bradley T. Johnson. The latter brigade was sent before the battle "to cut the Northern Central and the Philadelphia and Baltimore railroads.")

Artillery, Lieut.-Col. J. Floyd King.

(Composed of Nelson's, Braxton's and McLaughlin's battalions.)

*With the forces above enumerated General Early continued his movement on Washington.*

In his official report he says that in the action at the Monocacy "our entire loss was between 600 and 700, including the cavalry," and that when in front of Washington "my infantry force did not exceed 10,000."\*

## D.

### LOSSES.

General Frank Wheaton reports the killed and wounded of the 1st and 3d Brigade, 6th Corps as

59 killed,  
145 wounded.

Dr. Robert Reyborn gives the casualties of the 22d Corps as

12 killed,  
61 wounded.

The 25th New York Cavalry suffered severely on July 11th but I am unable to find any record of its losses. We know, however, that there are five of this Regiment buried at Battle Ground Cemetery and others who died from

\* Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, Vol. IV., p. 499.

wounds received before Fort Stevens are said to be buried at the Soldiers Home and Arlington. I think it would be fair to assume that at least 8 men were killed in this Regiment which bore the brunt of the early fighting, and 30 wounded.\*

General Meigs reported 1 killed and 1 wounded. The 8th Illinois Cavalry lost men as well as the 150th and other Ohio regiments not mentioned by Dr. Reyburn. I estimate the total killed and wounded to have been about 400.

Since writing the above, I find the following in the Civil War in the U. S., Vol. XXIII.

CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY. COMPILED FROM OFFICIAL  
\* RECORDS.

FORT STEVENS, WASHINGTON, D. C.

22 Corps, 1 & 2 Divs., 6 Corps, Marines, Home Guards, Citizens and Convalescents.

UNION.	CONFEDERATE.
54 killed,	600 killed
319 wounded.	and wounded.

AMONG THE OFFICERS KILLED WERE :

Lt. Col. J. D. Visscher,	43 N. Y. Vols.
Lt. Col. G. M. Johnson,	49 " "
Maj. James P. Jones,	7 Maine "
First Lt. John E. Bailey,	7 " "
First Lt. David E. Lambart, Jr.,	49 N. Y. Vols.
Second Lt. Wm. Laughlin,	61 Penna. "

\* Mr. T. Raymond, Custom House, New York, formerly a member of the 25th New York Cavalry, has just written me that from letters to his home in 1864, he finds that the loss of that regiment was 17 killed and 23 wounded out of 400 men engaged.

## AMONG THE OFFICERS WOUNDED WERE :

Col. J. F. Baillier,	98 Penn. Vols.
Lt. Wm. Wilson,	98 " "
Capt. Martin Hanimer,	98 " "
Asst. Surgeon Crawford,	102 " "
Maj. J. W. Crosby,	61 " "
Capt. Davis Cossitt,	122 N. Y. "
Capt. Geo. H. Baker,	7 Maine "
Lt. Col. W. B. French,	77 N. Y. "

Capt. Clark, Sixth Veteran Reserve, was wounded while attempting to take a barn near Rock Creek.

Lt. H. M. Nevius, 25 N. Y. Cavalry, lost his arm July 11th, near the McChesney Spring.

The following killed in action on July 11 and 12, 1864, are buried in Battle Ground Cemetery, near Brightwood.

NAME.	REGIMENT.
Sergeant Thomas Richardson.	} 25th N. Y. Cavalry.
Sergeant Alfred C. Starbird.	
Elijah S. Hufletin.	
Jeremiah Maloney.	
William Tray.	
E. C. Barrett.	40th N. Y. Infantry.
E. S. Bavett.	} 43d N. Y. Infantry.
John Davidson.	
Matthew J. DeGraff.	
G. W. Farrar.	
Mark Stoneham.	
Wm. H. Gillett.	49th N. Y. Infantry.
Corporal A. Matott.	} 77th N. Y. Infantry.
Corporal William Ruhle.	
Andrew J. Dowen.	
Andrew Manning.	
Alvarado Mowrey.	

John Bentley.	}	122d N. Y. Infantry.
Harvey P. B. Chandler.		
Daniel L. Hogeboon.		
Alanson Mosier.		
John Renia.		
Lieut. William McLaughlin.	}	61st Penna. Infantry.
Andrew Ashbaugh.		
Philip Bowen.		
John Ellis.		
George Garvin.		
H. McIntire.	}	93d Penna. Infantry.
William Holtzman.		
Sergeant George Marquet.		
Bernard Hoerle.		
Charles Seahouse.		
Frederick Walther.	}	98th Penna. Infantry.
Sergeant John M. Richards.		
John Dolan.		
Patrick Lovett.		
John Pockett.		
Corporal George W. Gorton.	}	139th Penna. Infantry.
Russell L. Stevens.		2d Mass. Cavalry.
C. S. Christ.		37th Mass. Infantry.
		7th Maine Infantry.
		1st R. I. Cavalry.
		3d Vermont Infantry.
		2d U. S. Artillery.



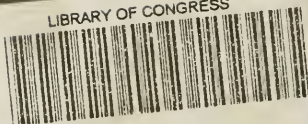








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